

Handle via BYEMAN
Control System

TOP SECRET

COMOR-D-48/76
(CWG-D-13/4)

25X1

22 June 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR: Committee on Overhead Reconnaissance

SUBJECT: The Standby Crisis Satellite

REFERENCE: USIB-D-41.14/7(COMOR-D-48/21), 11 Feb 63

Attached for the consideration of COMOR at its meeting on 25 June is a draft memorandum to the Board on the above subject prepared by the COMOR Photo Working Group. This is responsive to the COMOR request to the PWG on 11 June 1964 (see COMOR-M-245, para 3 b).

James Q. Reber
Chairman
Committee on Overhead Reconnaissance

Attachment:
Subject paper

Copies 2, 3 State TCO
4 DIA
5, 6, 7, 8 DIA TCO
9 OACSI TCO
10, 11 ONI TCO
12, 13, 14, 15 AFNIN TCO
16, 17 NSA TCO
18, 19 NRO TCO

BYE-2914-64
Copy 32 of 53

Handle via BYEMAN
Control System

25X1

25X1

25X1

TOP SECRET

GROUP 1
Excluded from automatic
downgrading and declassification

Handle via BYEMAN
Control System
D - R - A - F - T

TOP SECRET

COMOR-D-48/76
(CWG-D-13/4)

25X1

MEMORANDUM FOR THE UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

SUBJECT: The Standby Crisis Satellite

1. On 11 February 1963 (see ref, para 8b) the USIB requested that the NRO investigate the possibility of developing a standby satellite reconnaissance capability for use in crisis situations. This capability was to include provision for immediate replacement of vehicles fired and a means for these vehicles faking priority over other firings in the U. S. satellite schedule. Targets were to be relatively few in number and programming was to be tailored to cover a broad and representative sample of targets and as many as possible during each day's orbit.

2. In response to this request the NRO has programmed KH-4 vehicles against indications targets and placed them in standby status. Because seven days are required between the request for launch and actual firing, these KH-4 vehicles have become known as R minus 7 (R -7) standbys, the only satellite systems specifically programmed against indications targets. However, these vehicles are unsuitable for early-warning purposes; they are better suited as collectors of information which, in conjunction with collateral, may produce evidence of gradual mobilization or a check on enemy posture during a period of international tension.

3. The present KH-4 R -7 standby, however, suffers from a serious deficiency as a "crisis" vehicle, aside from the response time,* in that photographic resolution of the KH-4, which was designed primarily for search coverage, is insufficient for most indications purposes. For example, although it is usually possible to determine from KH-4 photography whether or not submarines are in port, they cannot always be identified by type. Smaller aircraft can be neither accurately counted nor typed. Transportation and ground force activity cannot be analyzed satisfactorily.

4. In view of the evident deficiencies of the KH-4 and the demonstrated capabilities of the KH-7, the latter vehicle appears to be better suited to an indications role. Although the KH-7 response time

*Ten days to two weeks (depending on time in orbit) appears to be about the most rapid response time that can be expected.

Handle via BYEMAN
Control System

25X1

TOP SECRET

Handle via BYEMAN
Control System

TOP SECRET

COMOR-D-48/76
(CWG-D-13/4)

25X1

is less than satisfactory, and perhaps fewer targets could be covered, the improved resolution would permit determination of air, ground, missile, and naval Order of Battle and could provide intelligence on highway and rail activity. Information of this kind would contribute materially to a more accurate evaluation of a developing situation.

5. Conclusions:

a. The KH-4 is not an effective vehicle for crisis situations.

b. The KH-7, while having limitations, comes closer to meeting crisis needs.

6. Recommendation: That the NRO be requested to substitute the KH-7 for the KH-4 as a crisis satellite as an interim until near real time reconnaissance systems become available.

Handle via BYEMAN
Control System

25X1

TOP SECRET

Handle via BYEMAN
Control System

~~TOP SECRET~~
GAMBIT/CORONA

COMOR-D-48/76
(CWG-D-13/4)

Copy 1 DCI TCO for USIB/S
20 TSO CIA
21
22-30 AsstOps/NPIC
31 DDI TCO
32, 33 CGS
34, 35 CIA COMOR Member
36, 37 Ch/COMOR Wkg Grp
38 CGS/ReqBr/ReconGrp
39 AD/SI
40 DDP TCO
41 DDS&T TCO
42 C/Action/DDS&T
43 AD/EL
44 AD/SA
45 FA/OSA
46 ID/OSA
47 SS/OSA
48 SAL/OSA
49 RB/OSA
50-53 SA (COMOR)/DDS&T

25X1